

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend claims 1, 8, 13 and 20.

Please add new claims 27-32 as follows.

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1. (Currently amended): A method for ~~providing~~ facilitating the distribution of travel-related information, comprising:

communicating with a customer over a computer network, wherein communicating with the customer includes receiving contact information from the customer;

identifying a plurality of experts, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with a destination expert server;

receiving, from the customer, a request relating to a destination city to which the customer ~~is interested in traveling~~ desires to travel;

facilitating a selection of ~~selecting~~ a destination expert ~~of~~ from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city; ~~and~~

forwarding the customer's request and the customer's contact information to the destination expert, such that the destination expert can communicate with the customer to provide a response to the customer request; and

retrieving from an answer database, an answer to the customer request, such that the destination expert response includes the retrieved answer.

2. (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein ~~determining~~ facilitating selection of a destination expert comprises determining a destination expert of the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city.

3. (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein communicating with the customer over the computer network includes receiving a credit card number from the customer.

4. (Original): The method of claim 2, wherein the destination expert response includes an offer to book reservations relating to the customer request.

5. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving the destination expert response from the destination expert and forwarding the destination expert response to the customer.

6. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising facilitating a transaction with the customer, wherein the transaction relates to the customer request.

7. (Original): The method of claim 1, further comprising monitoring communications of the destination expert server.

8. (Currently amended): A system for accepting and responding to a customer request for travel information relating to a destination city, comprising:

a destination expert server, wherein the destination expert server includes an answer database, said destination expert server configured to receive a request from a customer

~~a customer in communication with the destination expert server, wherein the customer submits a request to the destination expert server for information relating to the destination city, and~~

a plurality of experts in selective communication with the destination expert server, wherein the destination expert server forwards the customer request to a selected destination expert of the plurality of experts, and wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city, such that the destination expert can communicate with the customer to provide a response to the customer request, wherein the destination expert retrieves from the answer database, an answer to the customer request, such that the destination expert response includes the retrieved answer.

9. (Original): The system of claim 8, wherein the customer provides the destination expert server with customer contact information, and wherein the customer

contact information is forwarded by the destination expert server to the destination expert.

10. (Original): The system of claim 8, wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city.

11. (Original): The system of claim 8, wherein the destination expert server is accessible to the customer via the internet.

12. (Original): The system of claim 10, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server via electronic mail.

13. (Currently amended): A computer-readable storage medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method performed by a destination expert server, said processing instructions directing a computer to perform the steps of:

communicating with a customer over a computer network, wherein communicating with the customer includes receiving contact information from the customer;

identifying a plurality of experts, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server;

receiving, from the customer, a request relating to a destination city to which the customer is interested in traveling;

facilitating determination of ~~determining~~ a destination expert ~~of~~ from the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert has particular knowledge about the destination city; ~~and~~

forwarding the customer's request and the customer's contact information to the destination expert, such that the destination expert can communicate to the customer a response to the customer request; and

retrieving from an answer database, an answer to the customer's request, such that the destination expert response includes the retrieved answer.

14. (Original): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of ~~determining~~

facilitating determination of a destination expert comprises processing instructions for directing the computer to perform the step of determining a destination expert of the plurality of experts, and wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city.

15. (Original): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of communicating with the customer comprise processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of communicating with the customer over the computer network, wherein communicating with the customer over the computer network includes receiving a credit card number from the customer.

16. (Original): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of forwarding the customer's request and the customer's contact information to the destination expert comprises processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of forwarding the customer's request and the customer's contact information to the destination expert, such that the destination expert can communicate to the customer a response to the customer request, and wherein the destination expert response includes an offer to book reservations relating to the customer request.

17. (Original): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions further direct the computer to perform the step of receiving the destination expert response from the destination expert and forwarding the destination expert response to the customer.

18. (Original): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions further direct the computer to perform the step of facilitating a transaction with the customer, wherein the transaction relates to the customer request.

19. (Original): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 14, wherein the processing instructions further direct the computer to perform the step of monitoring communications of the destination expert server.

20. (Currently amended): A device enabling customers access to experts located in cities to which the customers may wish to travel, where the experts can answer customer questions and book travel arrangements for the consumers, comprising:

a processor;

a storage device in communication with the processor via a system bus, wherein the storage device includes an answer database, and

a memory connected to the processor, the memory including an operating system for storing a program to control the operation of said processor, and a destination expert control module,

wherein the processor is operative with the destination expert control module to:

communicate with a customer over a computer network, wherein communicating with the customer includes receiving contact information from the customer;

identify a plurality of experts, wherein the plurality of experts are in selective communication with the destination expert server;

receive, from the customer, a request relating to a destination city to which the customer is interested in traveling;

determine a destination expert of the plurality of experts, wherein the destination expert is located in the destination city, and

forward the customer's request and the customer's contact information to the destination expert, such that the destination expert can communicate with the customer to provide a response to the customer request, wherein the destination expert retrieves from the answer database, an answer to the customer's request, such that the destination expert response includes the retrieved answer.

21. (Original): The device of claim 20, wherein the identification of a plurality of experts comprises confirming that the destination expert is familiar with the destination city.

22. (Original): The device of claim 20, wherein communicating with the customer over the computer network includes receiving a credit card number from the customer.

23. (Original): The device of claim 20, wherein the destination expert response includes an offer to book reservations relating to the customer request.

24. (Original): The device of claim 20, wherein the processor is further operative with the destination expert control module to receiving the destination expert response from the destination expert and forward the destination expert response to the customer.

25. (Original): The method of claim 20, wherein the processor is further operative with the destination expert control module to facilitate a transaction with the customer, wherein the transaction relates to the customer request.

26. (Original): The method of claim 20, wherein the processor is further operative with the destination expert control module to monitor communications of the destination expert server.


27. (New): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of retrieving an answer from an answer database is performed automatically without intervention by the destination expert.

28. (New): The method of claim 27, further including the step of transmitting the automatically retrieved answer to the customer.

29. (New): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform the step of retrieving an answer from an answer database are performed automatically, without intervention by the destination expert.

30. (New): The computer-readable storage medium of claim 29, wherein the processing instructions for directing a computer to perform further include the step of transmitting the automatically retrieved answer to the customer.

31. (New): The device of claim 20, wherein the processor is operative with the destination expert control module to retrieve the answer automatically from the answer database automatically without intervention by the destination expert.

 32. (New): The device of claim 31, wherein the processor is operative with the destination expert control module to transmit the automatically retrieved answer to the customer.
